

The Eclectic Theosophist

FOLLOWING THE BLAVATSKY AND POINT LOMA TRADITION

ISSUED BI-MONTHLY BY POINT LOMA PUBLICATIONS, INC.

Subscription (6 issues)

\$2.50; foreign \$3.00

P.O. Box 6507 — San Diego, California 92106

Editors: W. Emmett Small, Helen Todd

Per Copy 50c

This *Eclectic* issue is devoted to what we invitingly call Summer Reading. We hope our readers will enjoy and profit from its varied contributions.

—EDITORS

THE MALEVOLENT MUMMY CASE

The following is reprinted from *Inquest*, a book by S. Ingleby Addie, formerly H. M. Coroner for Central London (2nd impression 1941).

Reference at the end of this article to the *Titanic* calls to mind that one of its passengers on its ill-fated voyage was William T. Stead, editor of the *Pall Mall Gazette*, which in its issue of April 25, 1889, published a review of *The Secret Doctrine*. This review, though unsigned, was written by Annie Besant. The historical facts surrounding its writing and publication are described by Boris de Zirkoff, editor of *Blavatsky Collected Writings*, in the volume of Index and Bibliography accompanying the latest 2-volume edition of *The Secret Doctrine*. (Theosophical Publishing House, Adyar). Readers are invited to read pages 476-78, which give a stirring account of the role played by William Stead in establishing the first contact between H.P.B. and Annie Besant.

—EDITORS

If I were seeking a title for another mysterious story I have in mind now I might call it "The Haunted Mummy Case." This is a rather melodramatic title perhaps for a curious story which is none the less (I believe) founded on a set of facts which may seem extremely odd, though they may only have been a series of strange coincidences.

A friend of mine, now dead, Fletcher Robinson by name and at one time editor of the now defunct weekly *Vanity Fair*, told me that he once asked the late Dr. Budge, head of the Egyptian Mummy Department at the British Museum, why he had given a certain mummy case there such a prominent position and so conspicuous a label.

"Hal!" said Budge. "That is the case of the Princess —a priestess. I think she is contented and satisfied now, and at any rate she is quiet." He proceeded to explain himself by telling the following story:

Many years ago the case was purchased by three young Englishmen, A, B, and C, from an Arab when they were all three enjoying a trip up the Nile in a dahabesh.

It was taken on board and stood in A's cabin. The following night a gunshot was heard from this cabin and A was found to have been shot in the arm and eventually had to have the arm amputated.

The next night B, who had placed the case in his cabin, disappeared altogether and was never seen again. It was thought that he had fallen overboard and as he could not swim had been drowned, although no cry for help had been heard.

When C arrived at Cairo he received a cable informing him that he was ruined owing to the great Baring Bank crook; all his fortune was held by that bank.

Somehow or other the mummy case arrived in England and then disappeared. It was probably sold by C.

Many years later Madame Blavatsky, the well-known theosophist, was paying a week-end visit to a large house in Streatham.

On her arrival she suddenly announced that she was quite unable to stay in the house and must return home at once. In answer to her host's enquiries she said there was some malevolent influence in his house, something diabolical and harmful, and she could not possibly sleep there. Rather piqued at this astonishing theory the host jokingly invited her to have a look round and see if she could lay this ghost for them, at the same time suggesting that it might be that the drains were at fault.

Madame Blavatsky agreed and examined the whole house without result, but on entering the attic she immediately exclaimed: "It is here. I feel it. It is quite near. I shall find it. Wait!"

She hunted round in the semi-darkness but found nothing until she opened a cupboard in a far corner, and there stood the famous mummy case. She indicated at once that that was the source of the evil influence she had felt. She had never been in the house before, nor had she heard the stories told about the haunted mummy case, but she left the house at once after imploring the host to get rid of it as soon as possible.

This was done, as Dr. Budge agreed to take it, and it was removed to the British Museum where two porters carried it up the stairs. One of these men fell on the steps and broke his leg; the other died suddenly the following day whilst apparently in perfect health. Dr. Budge, having heard all about this series of catastrophes, ordered a well-known firm of photographers to come and take a photograph of the wonderful case. The photographer did so and returned the next day in a state of great excitement. He declared that his photograph did not show the conventional painted Egyptian face on the case but the face of some living woman of malevolent aspect. Dr. Budge then told the man the story of all these accidents, whereupon the photographer went home, locked himself in his bedroom, and shot himself!

This curious series of coincidences ended dramatically in the year 1912, when the mummy case was sold to an American Egyptologist who, with his precious purchase, left England for the United States on board the ill-fated *Titanic*, which sank on this her maiden voyage after colliding with an iceberg in mid-Atlantic, with the loss of 1500 lives.

H.P.B. — A PROFILE OF THOSE DAYS

ALEXANDER WILDER, M.D.

. . . The study in which Madame Blavatsky lived and worked was arranged after a quaint and primitive manner. It was a large front room, and being on the side next to the street, was well lighted. In the midst of this was her den, a spot fenced off on three sides by temporary

partitions, writing desk and shelves for books. She had but to reach out an arm to get a book, paper or other article that she might desire, that was within the enclosure. In this place Madame Blavatsky reigned supreme, gave her orders, issued her judgments, conducted her correspondence, received her visitors and produced the manuscript of her book.

She did not resemble in manner or figure what I had been led to expect. She was tall, but not strapping; her countenance bore the marks and exhibited the characteristics of one who had seen much, travelled much, and experienced much. Her figure reminded me of the description which Hippocrates has given to the Scyths, the race from which she was probably descended. Her appearance was certainly impressive, but in no respect was she coarse, awkward, or ill-bred. On the other hand she exhibited culture, familiarity with the manners of the most courtly society and genuine courtesy itself. She expressed her opinions with boldness and decision, but not obtrusively. It was easy to perceive that she had not been kept within the circumscribed limitations of a common female education; she knew a vast variety of topics and could discourse freely upon them.

In several particulars, I presume that I never fairly or fully understood her. Perhaps this may have extended further than I am willing to admit. I have heard tell of her profession of super-human powers and of extraordinary occurrences that would be termed miraculous. I, too, believe, like Hamlet, that there are more things in heaven and earth than our wise men of this age are willing to believe. But Madame Blavatsky never made any such claim to me. We always discoursed on topics which were familiar to both, as individuals on a common plane. Colonel Olcott often spoke to me as one who enjoyed a grand opportunity, but she herself made no affectation of superiority. Nor did I ever see or know of any such thing occurring with anyone else.

She professed, however, to have communicated with personages whom she called "the Brothers," and intimated that this, at times, was by the agency, or some means analogous to what is termed "telepathy." I have supposed that an important condition for ability to hold such intercourse was abstinence from artificial stimulation such as comes from the use of flesh as food, alcoholic drink and other narcotic substances. I do not attach any specific immorality to these things, but I have conjectured that such abstemiousness was essential in order to give the mental power full play, and to the noetic faculty free course without impediment or contamination from lower influence. But Madame Blavatsky displayed no such asceticism. Her table was well furnished, but without profusion, and after a manner not differing from that of other housekeepers. Besides, she indulged freely in the smoking of cigarettes, which she made as she had occasion. I never saw any evidence that these things disturbed, or in any way interfered with her mental acuteness or activity.

She spoke the English language with the fluency of one perfectly familiar with it, and who thought in it. It was the same to me as though talking with any man of my acquaintance. She was ready to take the idea as it was expressed, and uttered her own thoughts clearly, concisely

and often forcibly. Some of the words which she employed had characteristics which indicated their source. Anything which she did not approve or hold in respect she promptly disposed of as "flapdoodle." I have never heard or encountered the term elsewhere. Not even the acts or projects of Colonel Olcott escaped such scathing, and in fact he not infrequently came under her scorching criticism. He writhed under it, but, except for making some brief expression at the time, he did not appear to cherish resentment.

— Reprinted from *The Theosophist*, Sept. 1977

THE WANDERING EYE

BRYAN KINNAVAN

This is a tale set in old Ireland. It first appeared in *The Path*, Vol. IV, May 1889, and was signed by Bryan Kinnavan, one of William Q. Judge's pen-names, and is included in Volume I of *Echoes of the Orient* in the Section "Occult Tales." This section also contains Judge's other stories, "Papyrus," "A Curious Tale," "The Serpent's Blood," "The Magic Screen of Time," "The Tell-Tale Picture Gallery," "The Skin of the Earth," "The Turn of the Wheel," "Where the Rishis Were," "The Persian Students' Doctrine," "The Coming of the Serpent," and "A Weird Tale," all of which, except the last named, were in *The Path* (between 1887 and 1893). "A Weird Tale" was originally printed in *The Theosophist*, Vol. VI, July 1885. Both Vol. I and II of *Echoes of the Orient* are available now from Point Loma Publications, Inc. — EDS.

This is not a tale in which I fable a mythical and impossible monster such as the Head of Rahu, which the common people of India believe swallows the moon at every eclipse. Rahu is but a tale that for the vulgar embodies the fact that the shadow of the earth eats up the white disk, but I tell you of a veritable human eye; a wanderer, a seeker, a pleader; an eye that searched you out and held you, like the fascinated bird by the serpent, while it sought within your nature for what it never found. Such an eye as this is sometimes spoken of now by various people, but they see it on the psychic plane, in the astral light, and it is not to be seen or felt in the light of day moving about like other objects.

This wandering eye I write of was always on the strange and sacred Island where so many things took place long ages ago. Ah! yes, it is still the sacred Island, now obscured and its power overthrown — some think forever. But its real power will be spiritual, and even though the minds of men today know not the spirit, caring only for the temporal glory, the old virtue of the Island will once again return. What weird and ghostly shapes still flit around her shores; what strange, low, level whisperings sweep across her mountains; how at the evening's edge just parted from the day, her fairies suddenly remembering their human rulers — now sunk to men who partly fear them — gather for a moment about the spots where mystery is buried, and then sighing speed away.

It was here the wandering eye was first seen. By day it had simply a grey color, piercing, steady, and always bent on finding out some certain thing from which it could not be diverted; at night it glowed with a light of its own, and could be seen moving over the Island, now quickly, now slowly as it settled to look for that which it did not find.

The people had a fear of this eye, although they were then accustomed to all sorts of magical occurrences now unknown to most western men. At first those who felt themselves annoyed by it tried to destroy or catch it, but never succeeded, because the moment they made the attempt the eye would disappear. It never manifested resentment, but seemed filled with a definite purpose and bent toward a well-settled end. Even those who had essayed to do away with it were surprised to find no threatening in its depths when, in the darkness of the night, it floated up by their bedsides and looked them over again.

If any one else save myself knew of the occasion when this marvelous wanderer first started, to whom it had belonged, I never heard. I was bound to secrecy and could not reveal it.

In the same old temple and tower to which I have previously referred, there was an old man who had always been on terms of great intimacy with me. He was a disputer and a doubter, yet terribly in earnest and anxious to know the truths of nature, but continually raised the question: 'If I could only know the truth; that is all I wish to know.'

Then, whenever I suggested solutions received from my teachers, he would wander away to the eternal doubts. The story was whispered about the temple that he had entered life in that state of mind, and was known to the superior as one who, in a preceding life, had raised doubts and impossibilities merely for the sake of hearing solutions without desire to prove anything, and had vowed, after many years of such profitless discussion, to seek for truth alone. But the Karma accumulated by the lifelong habit had not been exhausted, and in the incarnation when I met him, although sincere and earnest, he was hampered by the pernicious habit of the previous life. Hence the solutions he sought were always near but ever missed.

But toward the close of the life of which I am speaking he obtained a certainty that by peculiar practices he could concentrate in his eye not only the sight but also all the other forces, and willfully set about the task against my strong protest. Gradually his eyes assumed a most extraordinary and piercing expression which was heightened whenever he indulged in discussion. He was hugging the one certainty to his breast and still suffering from the old Karma of doubt. So he fell sick, and being old came near to death. One night I visited him at his request, and on reaching his side I found him approaching dissolution. We were alone. He spoke freely but very sadly, for, as death drew near, he saw more clearly, and as the hours fled by his eyes grew more extraordinarily piercing than ever, with a pleading, questioning expression.

"Ah," he said, "I have erred again; but it is just Karma. I have succeeded in but one thing, and that ever will delay me."

"What is that?" I asked.

The expression of his eyes seemed to embrace futurity as he told me that his peculiar practice would compel him for a long period to remain chained to his strongest eye — the right one — until the force of the energy expended in learning that one feat was fully exhausted. I

saw death slowly creeping over his features, and when I had thought him dead he suddenly gained strength to make me promise not to reveal the secret — and expired.

As he passed away, it was growing dark. After his body had become cold, there in the darkness I saw a human eye glowing and gazing at me. It was his, for I recognized the expression. All his peculiarities and modes of thought seemed fastened into it, sweeping out over you from it.

Then it turned from me, soon disappearing. His body was buried; none save myself and our superiors knew of these things. But for many years afterwards the wandering eye was seen in every part of the Island, ever seeking, ever asking and never waiting for the answer.

HOW IS A STORY WRITTEN?

TALBOT MUNDY

Following are extracts from an article originally titled "Apology" which appeared in *The Theosophical Path*, Vol. XXX, No. 1, January 1926, and may be of special interest, as a biography of Talbot Mundy by Peter Berresford-Ellis will be published next year, and later this year a biography of Mundy's works by Don Grant will appear. These publications were intended to mark Mundy's centennial of April 23, 1879. Mr. Mundy, well-known in the first third of this century as a prolific writer of adventure stories with philosophic and mystical overtones and a setting mainly in India, was a member of the Theosophical Society (Point Loma) and a valued contributor to its Society's periodicals.

— EDs.

I suppose that, first and last, at least five hundred people have asked me: "How is a story written?" There are three unanswered letters on my desk now, in each of which that question is put; but I believe that whoever could answer it truthfully, could also tell what holds the stars in place. Repeatedly I have put that problem to myself and other writers, but I have never heard or read an explanation that explained.

However, I am almost sure of this: as fishermen develop 'fish sense'; horsemen achieve 'horse sense' (some, of course, are born with it); musicians develop ability to listen to the music of the spheres; and painters educate their eyes until they see what other men cannot distinguish until it has been selected for them, and interpreted in paint, and framed; so writers, who are not too densely wrapped in dogmatisms of their own or (worse yet!) dogmatisms learned at second-hand, inflicted on them by the pundits of mediocrity, learn how to use what I must call a 'write sense,' for lack of any other word in English that suggests it.

Oskar A H. Schmitz, in a recent essay in the *Kölnische Zeitung*, asks: "Does a writer need to know anything?" But the answer is, that a writer does know. If he does not know, he cannot write. He knows as the musician hears, and as the painter sees; although I don't know how he knows, and I certainly can't explain it.

But to know is not nearly the whole of the problem. There remains the technical, extremely difficult, accomplishment of differentiating, of selecting, of interpreting into literary form, and of convincing the reader. A man may know where fish are, but it is another thing to catch them, and still another thing to get them, fresh and pleasant to the eye, to market. It is possible to fish for mackerel and catch dog-fish. There are also jellyfish, and

some sorts that are poisonous.

One other thing seems obvious to me: we humans are as composite as any other thing in nature. We are capable of unplumbed depths of infamy, and of unreached heights of godliness. In each of us are all the elements, both spiritual and material, that go to make up what is human nature in the aggregate. We are microcosms of the macrocosm. Consequently, what a man writes in his books (though incidents and details may be all imaginary, and though nothing in the book is therefore true, in one sense of the word) essentially is a picture of his own mind, of his own life, of his own (latent though they may be) possibilities.

Shakespeare was not Falstaff. He was capable of being Falstaff. He was capable of being Hamlet. He knew all about both those characters and all the others because their essences were in himself. What made him the greatest dramatist since Aeschylus was his (divine, I like to think) ability to read his own human nature, to select from it, and to write down what he knew in an appealing way.

The intellect, I think, is a machine that can be constantly improved, and that only wears out when allowed to lie idle or bury itself into pits of its own digging. As the intellect improves with use a writer (or any other individual) should find new phases of humanity to wonder at, and ponder over, and admire; he should discern new aspects (new to him, at any rate), and by abandoning old views incur the obloquy of inconsistency. The obloquy is very good for him, because it will reveal to him a wealth of unexplored intolerances in himself.

The only thoroughly consistent people are the dead ones. Let them bury their own dead. Our business is living, and life is a perpetual ascent from peak to higher peak of comprehension.

So what is a tale, after all, but a picture of any man's mind? And does it make the slightest difference, when you have read the book, or before you have read it, that you should know its author stands seventythree inches in his boots, weighs one hundred and eightyfive pounds, has a wife and an Airedale dog, and once walked all the length of Africa? The important question is, what thinking has he done? And is he a 'wowser' or a 'muckrake'? Are his villains human, and his heroes and his heroines not too immaculate? Can you read his book without wishing you had not? And does he make you feel that there are wide horizons, unfenced and not marked 'No Trespassers,' toward which any one may go adventuring without incurring self-contempt?

ARCANE STORIES

FRANCIS MERCHANT

Francis Merchant is the author of *A.E.: An Irish Promethean* (A Study of the Contribution of George William Russell to World Culture), *The Golden Hoard: Gateways to Synthesis*, *The Path of the Fiery Rainbow*, *Great Images* (which includes a chapter on "Messenger of the Mahatmas, H.P. Blavatsky"), and other works. Following are two short pieces from his *Arcane Stories* (1975). — EDS.

THE REFINING CANDLE

A fine wax candle that had been stored in a box with

many of its brethren complained that it was being condemned to an unproductive life of enforced leisure.

"What good is a candle if it doesn't burn?" it cried. "Isn't that what I was made for?"

"Your turn will come," comforted a stately ornamental candle nearby.

In due time the candle was taken from the box, placed in an elaborate holder, and its wick was set aflame.

Now the candle was satisfied. Its unflickering light penetrated into the dark corners of the room and could be seen through the window at quite a distance.

After a time the candle noticed that it was decreasing in size, even though its flame remained as bright as ever.

"What will happen to me?" exclaimed the candle when it had made this discovery. "Moment by moment I am growing smaller. Now trees don't have this problem. They grow consistently larger. Why should I be rewarded for my enlightening services by forfeiting my very substance?"

At this point the ornamental candle spoke up. "Why are you so fearful? Can't you see that you have been transformed into light? Even human beings don't often achieve this. The light that goes out on this plane becomes radiance elsewhere. All of us must burn, but whether it be on an altar or in a humble hut, we are all prophets preaching that the time of darkness will end."

THE NEW OPTOMETRY

A scholar paused at a shop on a busy street, eyeing a large sign with the word *Optometrist* on it. He opened the door, went in, and saw a shrewd-faced man behind the counter.

"What can I do for you?" the shopkeeper asked.

"I've been reading a good deal lately," said the scholar, "and I fear that I have strained my eyes somewhat. Can you give me a test to find out whether I need glasses to correct my vision?"

"In the past we used to correct vision," the optometrist replied, "but now we alter it."

"What is the difference?"

"I can see that you haven't kept up with the times," said the shopkeeper briskly.

"We used to provide people with spectacles so that they might see what is set before them, but now we fit them out with lenses that show them, not what is there, but what they would like to behold. It's much better that way, I can assure you."

"I'm interested in seeing objects as they are," retorted the scholar, a bit annoyed, "not what I'd like to see."

"Ah, but you're wrong," said the shopkeeper, shaking his head sadly. "You're missing most of the joys of living."

"How is that?"

"What you would like to believe is so much more satisfying and agreeable than the bare reality. For example, a man came to me this morning and said he was becoming disturbed by the wrinkles that were increasingly apparent in his wife's face. I gave him lenses that screen out the wrinkles so that he won't see them. What is the result? Now he is a happy man. Last week a business man came to me who was having indigestion whenever he watched television programs. The spectacles I prescribed

changed the situation completely and he can now watch television day and night, yet remain merry and light-hearted."

"That may be," exclaimed the scholar, "but I don't want my vision altered. I want to see reality as it is."

"Why oppose progress?" queried the shopkeeper. "We can make the ugly appear beautiful, the reprehensible praiseworthy, the disagreeable pleasing. Many of my customers have assured me that they would have had nervous breakdowns if we hadn't adjusted their vision. Mental patients in hospitals by the thousands have been set free shortly after they put on the new kind of spectacles. If that isn't progress, then I don't understand what it is."

"Look here," cried the scholar a bit impatiently, "I'd like to have old-fashioned glasses that will enable me to see the world as it is."

"Then I must tell you," returned the shopkeeper, his voice rising, "that you are out of tune with the times. We serve thousands of people here, and you are the only person who has found reason to object to our standardized procedures."

"Do I understand, then, that you refuse to serve me?" the scholar demanded to know.

"Not at all, sir," replied the shopkeeper. "You are asking for something that has gone out of style, and we no longer carry the line of spectacles on which you insist. In fact, we would lose money if we did."

The scholar was silent for a moment. "If I'm the only person who wants to see reality," he said slowly, "the world must be in a sorry mess."

"You are sadly mistaken," the shopkeeper declared. "The world is happy, and you are sad. With the proper spectacles you would see everything in a different light. Come, now, won't you let me prescribe for you?"

"No, thanks," said the scholar shortly as he strode decisively out of the shop.

THE EYELESS DRAGONS

QUINTUS REYNOLDS

Quintus Reynolds was one of several pen-names of Kenneth Morris, Professor of Literature and History at Theosophical University, Point Loma, California, for many years before his return to his native Wales in 1930 as President of the Welsh Section of the T.S. (Point Loma). For some time now Kenneth J. Zahorski, Professor of English, and Robert H. Boyer of St. Norbert College, De Pere, Wisconsin, have been doing intensive research on Kenneth Morris, and their work, a biographical-bibliographical study that aims to be definitive in nature, will be published by G. K. Hall this summer of 1981. "The Eyeless Dragons" first appeared in *The Theosophical Path*, Vol. VIII, No. 6, June 1915.

—EDS.

Chang Seng-Yu was to be the artist; that was why the crowds were so immense. The courts of the Temple of Peace and Joy had been full since dawn; although the sun would undoubtedly be well in heaven before the great Chang would mount the scaffolding and begin to work.

All Nankin had been agog since the word had gone forth that the Emperor desired a dragon painted on either of the two vast wall-surfaces of the Temple; and when it was reported further that Chang Seng-Yu was to

be the artist, then, indeed, the rejoicing was great. For the grand strokes of his brush were known; and his colors were delicate like the mists of evening on the Yangtse, or clear and lovely like the colors of flowers. Whenever he painted in public, the crowds would gather to watch; and from time to time to applaud the masterstrokes, the flashes of daring imagination, the moments when the sparks of creation most visibly flew. And they *knew*, did those crowds of the Chinese Renaissance — some fourteen centuries ago.

They loved Chang Seng-Yu for another reason, too, besides his genius and mastery of the brush. He was at least half a *Sennin**: many held that he had drunk the Elixir; that he could rein the flying Dragon, and visit the extremities of the earth, and bestride the hoary crane, to soar above the nine degrees of heaven. Such things were done, in those days. There was a certain power about Cheng Seng-Yu, that suggested infinite possibilities. One could never tell what might happen with any picture he might be painting.

A hush in the temple court; the artist had arrived, and with him a little band of disciples, bearing the brushes and pots of color. A quiet, gentle old man, who bows profoundly to the people as he comes in; and greets them with courteous formalities, not unaffectionately, while passing to the door of the Temple. With courteous formalities those spoken to respond, proud of the signal honor done them; for this is a popular hero, be it understood. The tailor and the cobbler have arranged in advance a holiday, and have come now with their families to spend the day in the Temple of Peace and Joy, watching the Master paint; the butcher's apprentice, sent on an errand, cannot resist the temptation; the porter, calculating possibilities to a nicety, deems that he may go in, watch so much wall-space covered with sudden life, and then, by hurrying, still arrive in time with his load. For with all these people, painting is poetry made visible, the mysteries of Tao indicated, Magic, the topmost wonder and delight of life. And this being by Chang Seng-Yu, will be no ordinary painting. —"Ah, in that honorable brush-sweep, one saw the effect of the Elixir!" cried the butcher's apprentice, radiant.

Day by day the crowds gathered in the court, and followed Chang Seng-Yu, when he arrived, into the Vast Temple. Day by day the intent silence was broken ever and anon into murmurs, and the murmurs into rippling exclamation. A sweep of the brush, and lo, the jaws of a dragon; and from that the wonderful form grew, perfect at each touch, scale by scale through all the windings of the vast body to the very end of the tail. All in shining yellow that might have been distilled out of the sunset, it gleamed across the great wall: a thing of exquisite curves, noble lines; flowing, grand, and harmonious; wherein all parts seemed cognate to, and expressive of, the highest perceptions and aspirations of man. To behold it was like hearing the sudden crash of a glorious and awe-inspiring music; the soul of every upright man would at once both bow down and be exalted. The crowd, watching, expected at any moment to see motion quiver through its length; to see it writhe, shake out mighty pinions, break forth from the wall and through the roof, and cleave a way into

*Adept

the blue ether. A little fear mingled with their intense delight: the Master, surely, was dealing in magic.

"Sir," said Lu Chao, "for what reason have you omitted to paint in the honorable eye?"

"Could this sacred Dragon see," answered Chang Seng-Yu "nothing would content his lordship but to seek his home in the playground of the lightnings."

"How is it possible?" said Lu Chao. "The Dragon is beautiful, but it is only a semblance wrought in pigment. How could such a semblance soar into the heavens? The Master is pleased to indulge in humor at the expense of this miserable one."

"Not so, Lu Chao," said the Master. "You have little understanding, as yet, of the mysteries of art."

But Lu Chao doubted, and it was a sorrow to him that Chang Seng-Yu should leave his creation incomplete.

The Yellow Dragon was finished, its glorious form covering the upper part of the south wall. The people could hardly forbear to worship; they saw in it Divine Power, the essence of Light-Bringing, the perfect symbol of inspiration, of holy and quickening thought from heaven. "If the Master had not left his creation eyeless," they said, "his lordship would never be content to dwell on earth. Heaven is the right abiding-place for such a one." But Lu Chao went on doubting.

He did not refer to the matter again; but when it came to his turn to hand the brush, newly dipped in the color pot, to Chang Seng-Yu, the latter as he looked down would shake his head, and a shadow would pass over his face. "Although of a good disposition, Lu Chao will never be a painter," thought he, sighing.

The scaffolding was removed to the opposite wall, and there, facing the other, a Purple Dragon began to grow. Occasionally the Son of Heaven himself, the Emperor Wu-ti, would visit the temple to inspect the growing work. Then the artist would descend to make obeisance; but Wu-ti, holy man, would have none from the creator of those dragons. "Make your obeisance with me, to these two lordly Messengers of Heaven," said he. "But for what reason has the honorable Master left the eyes to be painted last?"

"Sire," said Chang Seng-Yu, "the divine eyes of their lordships will not be painted. There is danger that they would be ill-contented with the earth, if they could see to soar into their native empyrean. No man could paint into their eyes such compassion, that they would desire to remain here."

"It is well," said the emperor. "Their soaring aspiration is evident. Let them remain to be the guardians of the Peace and Joy of my People."

Lu Chao heard, but even the Son of Heaven's belief failed to convince him. "It may be as the Master says," thought he; "but such matters are beyond my understanding. How could a semblance wrought of pigment feel aspiration or a desire for the ethereal spaces? It appears to me that the venerable Chang is indulging in humor when he speaks of painting compassion into their eyes."

The work was drawing to a close, and more and more Lu Chao doubted. It is true that he made progress in painting; and the skill shown in his work was applauded by many. For the day of the Consecration of the Dragons

had been appointed in advance; and there was time to spare; and on certain days now the Temple would be closed, and the Master and his disciples would work in the studio. Then Chang Seng-Yu, going from one to another, and commenting on the work of each, would shake his head a little sadly over Lu Chao's pictures. "You have skill and perseverance," he would say, "but faith is lacking."

Lu Chao pondered on this, but not with desire to acquire the faith. "Many say that I am making progress," thought he, "and it appears so to me also. The Master, truly, is harsh in his judgments. If I could show him that he is mistaken . . ." He considered the matter, and thought out his plans.

The Day of Consecration came; the great work was completed. Priests and augurs, sennins and doctors, gathered from all Liang, and from the kingdoms beyond the Yangtse and the Western Mountains. All day long there were sacrifices in the Temple of Peace and Joy, and processions passed through, doing joyful obeisance to the Dragons. At last night came, and the great hall and courts were silent.

The time had come for Lu Chao; now he would prove that the Master had been mistaken: that painted semblances could not shake themselves free from the walls whereon they were painted, and that he himself was making progress unhindered by lack of faith. "It may be that there is Magic," said he, "although I have never seen it. But reason forbids me to believe this."

He took a lantern, a small brush, and such paint as would be needed, and went down through the dark streets towards the Temple. There would be no trouble about obtaining entrance, he knew: should anyone question him, Chang Sen-Yu had forgotten something, and had sent him for it. But it was unlikely that he would meet anyone, and he hoped to pass in unseen. "No one will know that I did it," thought he. "It will be understood that the spirits painted in the eyes, displeased that the Master left the work unfinished."

He met no one; succeeded in climbing the gate; found a ladder in the court; placed it against the south wall by the head of the Yellow Dragon; climbed, and prepared to begin. It had been a dark night, but calm, as he came through the city; now, with the first touch of his brush, a peal of thunder, a lightning flash. In his sudden perturbation, the brush dropped, and he must go down after it. Were the genii offended? He hesitated, and had some thought of going home. "But no," said he; "this is fear; this is arrant superstition," — and mounted the ladder again. The lantern, hung from a rung close to the dragon's head, just threw light on that: a little disk of warm brightness fading into the gloom. It was enough for Lu Chao's purpose. A few brush-strokes; that would be all.

The first, and he was aware of fear. The second, and the wall seemed to him to be taken with unsteadiness. The third, and the sweat broke from his forehead and back, and his hand was trembling violently. He gathered his mind, reasoning with himself; steadied his hand, and put in the last stroke. The Yellow Dragon's eye was painted.

Lu Chao clung to the ladder. By the small light of the

lantern he saw the wonderful head turn until it was looking out into the Temple, full face instead of profile. It was the left eye that he had painted; now the two were there, glancing out hither and yonder, proudly, uneasily; flashing fiery rays through the empty darkness. The ladder was shaking, swaying. Suddenly the two amazing eyes were turned full on him, on Lu Chao. A shadow of disgust flitted over them; then they were filled with immeasurable sadness, sorrow deeper than might be borne. The neck drew back; by a super-natural light from the Dragon's eyes, Lu Chao saw it, drawn back and clear out of the wall. A crash, and he saw the immense pinions shaken forth. A horrible swaying of the world; a rending noise, a tearing and a crashing; a blinding flame . . .

All Nankin was awake and out in the streets. What the people saw was a Golden Wonder soaring up into the sky; a cometlike glory ascending, till it was lost in the darkness of Heaven.

In the morning the emperor visited the ruins of the Temple of Peace and Joy, and with him went Chang Seng-Yu the Master. The north wall alone was standing. The roof had gone up in a single blaze where the fiery wings cleaved it. Of the south wall, only the lower part remained; the rest had fallen. Under the debris they found the ladder, charred and broken, and the crushed body of Lu Chao.

"Ah," said Chang Sen-Yu sadly, "he would never have made an artist."

THE HOUSE ON THE BRIDGE

GEORGE CARDINAL LEGROS

Long ago a Wise Man said that our life is like a journey over a bridge that spans a part of Eternity. The bridge, like all bridges, is meant to be crossed, not to be tarried on. He said that many people make the mistake of stopping on the bridge and building houses on it.

But a bridge is no place for a house. Life is a bridge to be crossed, said the Wise Man. Don't stop and build a house on it. There isn't time, because as soon as you build it and start accumulating possessions, it is time to move on.

Many Pilgrims like yourself cross the bridge, and your house will stand in their way. They will trample it down, and you with it, and keep going because such is the Law of the Universe.

Therefore it is better to join your fellow pilgrims and travel to the country beyond, using the bridge as something to be crossed.

Don't make the mistake of trying to settle down in some comfortable place and watch the world go by, said the Wise Man. Nature won't let you because you are a part of the ever-unfolding, ever-progressing ALL, and your destiny is Eternal SELF-BECOMING.

There are born mystics whose karma plunges them into the mad maelstrom of twentieth century existence. To be "in the world, but not of it," is their only salvation. And it is important that they know about the House on the Bridge.

One has only to pause in the clamor and roar of modern life to realize that there is within and behind the manifest an ever-flowing spiritual tide of harmony, peace, and compassion on whose gentle waves the weary soul may rest.

Like the House on the Bridge, nothing is permanent here. To find that which is lasting and meaningful, that which goes on with us through all Eternity, we must reach out and become part of the tremendous upsweep of Divine Life, leaving behind our burdens of self-delusion and folly. Freedom to live, to be, to expand, grow, unfold, and become — this is the Goal to strive for, because only by identifying with it can we triumph over illusion, sin, and suffering, and join the ranks of Those whose lives are given utterly to mankind's redemption.

— Reprinted from *Messiah*, Sept. 1979

BOOK REVIEW

Fridericus, a novel by Frederic F. Flach, Lippincott & Crowell, \$9.95

This is a first novel by psychiatrist Frederic F. Flach who besides being the author of two professional books — *Choices* and *The Secret Strength of Depression* — is Associate Clinical Professor of Psychiatry at Cornell University Medical College as well as an attending psychiatrist at Payne Whitney Clinic of New York Hospital. As one would expect, the novel is written from the point of view of a clinically trained and experienced psychiatrist. To follow the arguments on the solutions to the problems of the characters, presented mainly by four different and differing professionals, is fascinating. Much of it revolves around the validity (or not) of reincarnation.

Dr. Flach became interested in the subject while researching material for his book on 'Depression' when he came upon a 17th century treatise on the same subject written by one Friederich F. Flacht, Latinized to 'M. Fredericus Flacht.' This treatise written in Latin very closely paralleled the ideas presented in Flach's own book. Startled by the coincidence of bearing the same name of the 1602 author, Dr. Flach mused on the possibility that he *might* be the reincarnation of the 17th century scholar. He took that factual situation and projected his novel which Lippincott & Crowell has published.

The novel's protagonist is Frederic Pleier, a brilliant New York psychiatrist with a very young suicidal patient who in a deeply disturbed state insists that Pleier has been — or is — his father, and shortly after that disappears mysteriously. Pleier is obsessively concerned about the disappearance, which preys upon his mind. It is not long before he is having horrifying dreams. He is given by a colleague the *FREDERICUS* treatise (which of course is authored by Fredericus Pleier in 1602) and is stunned by the similarity of names and ideas.

He meets Adam Rheinhart, a respected psychologist-experimentalist who is trying to prove the truth of reincarnation. Rheinhart eventually sends Pleier to an

eminent German psychologist, Dr. Willy Gutheim, who calls himself a 'theorist' because he too toys with the idea of reincarnation and has deep thoughts about the dangers involved in experiences concerning what Theosophists would call 'psychic matters.' He warns Pleier of the dangers, and indeed saves his life when Pleier is experiencing one of his frightening visions in the city of Worms. At the same time he assists Pleier in his pursuit of identifying with the alter ego 'Fridericus' by taking him to Basel where the 17th century Pleier had been a student and where the treatise was found. They also go to Worms where 'Fridericus' was born and lived most of his life. Dr. Gutheim also expounds his own theories. "I have developed what I call the concept of fusion . . . if we lived before, we must have had completeness then as well. Death destroys the integrity of mind and body, liberating the spirit, whatever that may be, and that spirit may then be reintegrated, whenever and for whatever reason, within a new physical form . . . the new personality has its own autonomy and uniqueness." It is presumed that Pleier has not completely 'fused' with his present 'form' and 'personality.'

Heedless of the warnings, Frederic Pleier, the New York psychiatrist, undergoes chilling hallucinations that thrust him into another dimension and time period and threatened to destroy him. Returning to New York and family, he continues to experience the psychic horrors and is finally placed in a prestigious mental hospital by his wife and his own psychiatrist, a loyal friend who of course with the institution's superintendent is skeptical of the whole 'absurd', 'ridiculous', 'silly' idea of reincarnation. Rheinhart is called, and, against the wishes of the hospital authorities, gives Pleier a series of hypnotic treatments. Finally a 'Fridericus' entity is presumed to have been identified, and eventually Pleier returns to normal health and his profession.

The book is a 'thriller' that keeps one interested. It is flawed as far as technical points about reincarnation are concerned. The biggest flaw is the presumption that the 'theory' can be proved by psychiatric training and clinical experiments, that there is no other authority to be considered. If Dr. Flach is earnestly interested in the subject of reincarnation, it would behoove him to get a wide perspective on the law of periodicity (cycles) and its relation to reincarnation through authoritative sources. His lack of concept of what a 'reincarnating ego' is stands in his way of writing a more convincing novel on the subject he has chosen.

— JALIE N. SHORE

MEDITATIONS — 19

Nay, but what better cause for reward, what better discipline, than the daily and hourly performance of duty? . . . The man or woman who is placed by Karma in the midst of small plain duties and sacrifices and loving kindnesses, will through these faithfully fulfilled rise to the larger measure of Duty, Sacrifice and Charity to all Humanity — what better path toward the enlightenment you are striving after than the daily conquest of Self . . .

— *The Mahatma Letters to A.P. Sinnett*, Letter No. LXVIII, p. 372.

AND WE QUOTE

Begin

Are you in earnest? Seize this very minute!
What you can do, or dream you can, begin it;

Boldness has genius, power, magic in it.
The start once made, you'll find the mind grows heated,
Begin, and then the work will be completed.

— Johann Wolfgang Goethe

Content

"I am content, wherever I be and whatever I do."
"But now it is time to die."

"Why say 'die'? Make no tragic parade of the matter, but speak of it as it is: 'It is now time for the material of which you are constituted to be restored to those elements from which it came.' And what is there terrible about that?"

— Epictetus, quoted in "Epictetus", *Hermes*, May 3, 1980, published by U.T.F., Santa Barbara, California

Mistakes

The Roman philosopher and statesman Cicero said it 2000 years ago, and it is still true today. The six mistakes of men are:

1. The delusion that individual advancement is made by crushing others.
2. The tendency to worry about things that cannot be changed or corrected.
3. Insisting that a thing is impossible because we cannot accomplish it.
4. Refusing to set aside trivial preferences.
5. Neglecting development and refinement of the mind, and not acquiring the habit of reading and study.
6. Attempting to compel other persons to believe and live as we do.

Ideas

Alfred North Whitehead, the great philosopher and mathematician, pointed out that in order to encourage one's own creative thinking:

- "(a) Fear not to be illogical.
- "(b) Overcome inertia towards change, towards the unconventional.
- "(c) Realize that insight does not flow from a plan or a logical sequence.
- "(d) Remove all mental blocks and personal inhibitions; let imagination roam.
- "(e) It helps to have 'crazy' ideas; these should be encouraged, not ridiculed.
- "(f) All truly great ideas seem absurd when first proposed."

CONTRIBUTIONS

The following contributions have been received since our last reporting and are here acknowledged with our grateful appreciation: M.R.H., \$5.00; M.L., \$100.00; J.H.D., \$20.00; R.H., \$30.00.